



Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative Update

March 2006

Dear WHMSI colleagues:

Since our last update, a lot has happened regarding the Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Initiative (WHMSI). Below you will find a summary of recent events. If you have questions or comments about any of these issues, please contact me or any member of the Interim Steering Committee.

Sincerely,

Herb Raffaele

Chair of the Interim Steering Committee

Second Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Conference:

The second Western Hemisphere Migratory Species Conference took place in San José, Costa Rica from January 17th to 20th, 2006. Over one-hundred government, non-governmental, and private sector employees and volunteers participated in the conference, representing thirty countries in the hemisphere and over fifty NGOs and Conventions. The meeting was entitled “Hands across the Hemisphere: Helping People to Help Wildlife”, and its primary focus was the development of priorities for hemisphere-wide capacity-building related to migratory species conservation (see below for information on how these priorities were used to provide direction for a GEF funding proposal for the Western Hemisphere). The Conference was hosted by Costa Rica’s Environment Minister Carlos Manuel Rodríguez who opened the event with a speech on the importance of sustainable development.

A number of important goals were accomplished at the Conference, including the identification and prioritization of capacity building needs in the Western Hemisphere for the conservation of migratory species, and the development of detailed guidance addressing how these needs might be delivered on-the-ground. Participants were divided into 5 groups and asked to vote for top priority audiences and training needs. Primary audiences identified by the participants included community leaders; local and national NGO’s; technical conservation personnel; protected area managers, and legislators and political officials. Top training needs included monitoring and evaluation of habitats; public outreach and environmental education; sustainable development; law and policy; and best practices. Participants were subsequently asked to develop project proposal elements like geographical scope of the training, existing programs and curricula, sizes of populations to be trained,

likely duration of courses, information exchange, scholarship and internship opportunities, estimation of resources required, and performance indicators.

Participants also explored mechanisms for addressing the six major themes identified as important hemispheric needs at the first WHMSI conference in Chile in 2003. These included the establishment of a center for information sharing; the creation of national plans for migratory species conservation; and the need for joint planning of activities under international conventions. Workgroups were asked to identify a general list of objectives for each topic, and develop a short list of actionable items. Factors included committee and membership issues, process, timelines, and products to be delivered.

Finally, a process was identified to further develop the Terms of Reference to guide WHMSI in the future. The discussions revolved around three

topics: the mandate of the Interim Steering Committee (ISC), the draft Terms of Reference for the initiative, and Ministerial endorsement of the initiative. As background, it should be noted that the Chile meeting mandated the ISC to develop Terms of Reference, and to share these with the ministers responsible for the environment in each country. The draft Terms of Reference were developed at an ISC meeting in August 2004, and circulated to ministers soon after that. However, only six countries replied, therefore, the plenary agreed to the following:

Interim Steering Committee shall,

- Continue its mandate from the Chile meeting (available in the proceedings of that meeting)
- Along with all WHMSI partners, actively follow-up regarding the GEF proposal in their various capacities, particularly with respect to country endorsement and counterpart contributions.
- Maintain all WHMSI partners, particularly governments, as informed as possible regarding steps it takes to fulfill its mandate.
- Produce and distribute proceedings of the meeting in as timely a manner as possible.

In regards to the Terms of Reference,

- All WHMSI partners are invited to review the draft Terms of Reference and send comments back by March 20th 2006 to the ISC. Subsequently a revised version will be circulated. The next plenary meeting will dedicate time to discussing the revised Terms of Reference.
- ISC will continue development of the Terms of Reference document with the aim that it will be accepted in principle by all WHMSI partners, and not for formal acceptance

In regards to Ministerial Endorsement,

- Participants agreed that it would be favorable to obtain a brief but succinct endorsement of WHMSI

by all relevant ministers responsible for the environment. Such a communiqué would:

- Recognize that WHMSI has been a positive step in following up on the 2001 Summit of the Americas declaration.
- State satisfaction with the diversity of partners involved in WHMSI.
- Urge WHMSI to continue moving forward to fulfill the 2001 declaration.
- ISC should prepare this document and follow-up to obtain its endorsement at an appropriate ministerial meeting.

Proceedings from the WHMSI conference will be completed and distributed around mid-year, once deadlines for the GEF proposal have been met.

GEF Proposal:

After incorporating the input from participants at the Conference in Costa Rica, the draft documents have been submitted to the Organization of American States and UNEP. You can find both the Executive Summary and the Project Document at:

<http://www.oas.org/dsd/WHMSI/English/Index.htm>

[Western Hemispheric Migratory Species Initiative \(WHMSI\)](#) under Events.

According to a recent GEF Secretariat decision, projects submitted to the June 2006 Council in the Biodiversity focal area will not be considered for review until the December 2006 Council, due to a lack of resources available to finance new projects under the remainder of GEF3 which ends in June 2006. The next GEF cycle starts in July 2006 (GEF4). In biodiversity, new guidelines for allocating resources called the Resource Allocation Framework (RAF) will be

implemented. The RAF allocates GEF resources to recipient countries to increase the impact of GEF funding on the global environment. The resources are allocated to countries based on each nation's potential to generate global environmental benefits and its capacity, policies and practices to successfully implement GEF projects. As such, the RAF builds on GEF's existing country-driven approach and partnerships with Implementing and Executing Agencies.

The WHMSI project Executive Summary and Project Brief will need to be endorsed by countries. Letters should include a sentence that states that this project is to be funded from national allocations and the RAF funds, and should be submitted under the December 2006 work program. The revised sample letter of endorsement can be found in English and Spanish in the same OAS website referenced above.

Countries have until August 31st, 2006 to submit letters in order to meet the Dec 2006 work program. Both the OAS and UNEP have assured the WHMSI Interim Steering Committee that they will do their best to support the project for the Dec 2006 GEF work program.

For any questions related to the GEF proposal, please contact Marina Ratchford at 703-358-2480 or marina_ratchford@fws.gov

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